

VZCZCXYZ0008
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMN #0825 2492021
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 062021Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6235
INFO RUCNMER/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2538
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0443
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP SANTIAGO 2901
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS MONTEVIDEO 000825

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT ALSO FOR WHA/BSC AND INL/LP (JHIDES)
BUENOS AIRES PLS PASS DEA ANTHONY GRECO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [UY](#)
SUBJECT: MAJOR COCAINE BUST IN URUGUAY

REF: STATE 00141871

¶1. (U) On September 5-6, the Uruguayan National Police's anti-drug unit DGRTID scored major success against international narco-traffickers operating here. The unit's "Operation Chimed" resulted in the largest cocaine HCl seizure (over 300 kg) in Uruguayan history. Police arrested twenty-four individuals from Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Korea in connection with the case. A cocaine laboratory with chemicals, reprocessing and repackaging equipment was raided, and six luxury vehicles, 100,000 Euros, USD 31,000 (in cash) and a number of suitcases specially designed to smuggle drugs were seized at various locations in and around Montevideo.

¶2. (SBU) On September 6, DGRTID's Director, Inspector Julio Guarteche told Emboffs that he was most grateful for the cooperation Uruguay had received from the US, particularly from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). He said that the high-quality cocaine appeared destined for Europe, but that he also had indications that some of the narco-trafficking organization's "investment money" originated in the United States. Guarteche said DGRTID was still investigating money laundering and other international dimensions of the case, including problems along the porous, largely un-patrolled border with Brazil.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: While perhaps not so large by some countries' standards, Operation Chimed is big news here. Ordinary citizens have become increasingly fed up with the mounting crime wave fueled by a flood of cheap coca paste. To us, both indicators point to Uruguay's increasing role in the international drug circuit. However, no INL funds are slated to assist Uruguay in the drug fight this year (reftel). Further details on Operation Chimed will be reported septel as appropriate. End Comment.
Nealon